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SECURITY INFORMATION

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COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Spring Famine, Hunan

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SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. The shortage of food in Hunan became noticeable about the first of March 1952 and has become continuously worse. Among the peasants, the chief causes are the low acreage of cultivated land, the less abundant harvests, and the forced sale of large quantities of food supplies to the Chinese Communist Food Company (CCFC). Much of the grain thus sold to the CCFC already has been exported from the area; and, furthermore, the CCFC limits the amount of grain which can be placed on sale daily from the stores which it still holds in the area.
2. In the cities, the CCFC has not had continuous supplies of food for sale. The situation has been aggravated in the cities by the fact that, in an attempt to protect their own interests, various local governments have prohibited the free movement of grain from the area which they control.
3. In Changsha foodstuffs sold daily by the CCFC have not been adequate, and many persons have been unable to purchase any rice at all. On 28 April 1952, at 10 a.m., more than 6,000 starving people assembled in the area where food shops are centered between Hsihuch'iao (6007/3275/2890) by the South Gate and the Main Street of the Great West Gate, a distance of one kilometer. They began to steal food supplies. The Changsha Public Security Administration immediately sent armed police and public security units to suppress the riots, which lasted until 11 p.m. There were more than 300 casualties among the starving people and over 100 arrests were made.
4. Worse conditions exist in the hsien under the Shaoyang (111-23, 27-15) Special Area; the daily requirements of this area amount to 2,500,000 catties of rice, but the daily supply has been only about 4,000 catties. Wukanghsien (110-38, 26-44) of this special area is a rice-producing area, but only about 2,000 catties of rice a day have been placed on sale.

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5. Other disturbances and small riots occurred in villages throughout Hunan from 3 April to 17 May, when small groups of persons set fire to hills, burned warehouses, stole food supplies, killed Communist cadre members, butchered plough-oxen and destroyed the spring cultivation. The Communist authorities have admitted openly that more than 2,000 cases of such "illegal activity" have occurred.
6. Disturbances have taken place at Changsha, Liling (113-30, 27-41), Iyang (112-20, 28-43), Ch'aling (113-32, 26-56), Lunghui (7127/0932), Hsinhua (111-23, 27-44), Wukang, Hanshou (111-57, 28-58), Hengshan (112-48, 27-16), Leiyang (112-50, 26-26), Yungshing (113-05, 26-09), Hsiangyin (112-56, 28-41), P'ingchiang (113-35, 28-42), Fenghuang (109-32, 27-56), Lingling (111-32, 26-15), Chianghua (111-27, 25-15), Ch'ench'i (110-07, 27-59), Mayang (109-35, 27-42), Chinghsien (109-34, 26-45), Suining (109-52, 26-33), Taohsien (111-28, 25-35), Ninghsiang (112-32, 28-18), and Tungan (111-09, 26-20).
7. The Chinese Communists have blamed these disturbances on planned activities of intelligence agents and unruly landowners, and about the end of April they began strong suppressive measures. They have organized a movement named "Szuch'a" (0934/2686),¹ the "Movement to Investigate the Four Crimes" (i.e., destructive activities, counter-offensives, rejection of reform-by-labor, and waste of land).

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25X1A [] Comment. The New York Times of 16 and 18 July 1952 carried stories from the Hankow Yangtze Daily, a Chinese Communist party organ, on the Hunan famine and disturbances. They reported that in Ch'enchou (110-15, 28-28), 300,000 persons, about 50 percent of the families, were hard-pressed for food, and that the Hunan authorities had ordered immediate distribution of grain confiscated from landlords.

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25X1A 1. [] Comment. [] the Sanch'a movement.

2. [] Comment. Possibly by the [] they blame for disturbances.

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